National Canners Association

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Information Letter

For N. C. A. Members

Membership Letter No. 24. July 28, 1923.

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Proposed Warehouse Plan for Disposal of Swells.

At the meeting of the Conference Committees in Chicago on July 15th, the following resolutions were passed:

"WHEREAS, As a result of the United States Service and Regulatory Announcements No. 381, prohibiting the return of spoiled food products in Interstate Commerce and on account of certain decisions of State and Municipal Officials in relation thereto, an emergency exists with reference to suitable credit by seller to buyer for spoiled canned foods,

"AND WHEREAS, It is the desire of both manufacturers and distributors of canned foods, as evidenced by the unanimous sentiment of the members of the Conference Committees of the National Wholesale Grocers' Association and the National Canners Association at their meeting in Chicago on July 15, 1923, that the protection of the interests of the public as well as those directly interested in the canned foods industry require the collection and destruction of all spoiled canned foods under proper official supervision involving necessarily the coöperation of all agencies, Federal, State, and Municipal, engaged in the enforcements of food laws,

"AND WHEREAS, It is believed that the interests of all can best be protected by the establishment of a reasonable number of zones throughout the United States in which there shall be selected approved warehouses, to which all canned products under suspicion shall be shipped, under suitable regulation, for the purpose of identification, examination, and destruction, where necessary,

"AND WHEREAS, Reasonable time will be required in which to accomplish this result,

"NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That as to contracts now existing between buyers and sellers of canned foods, which require the return to the seller of spoiled canned foods as a condition precedent to the payment of claims therefor

by the seller, we recommend that sellers pay all claims for canned foods destroyed under the existing regulations, the buyer giving the best available proof of such destruction, and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That as to any transaction entered into during this emergency, but not later than February 1, 1924, we recommend the payment by the seller of all claims for swells and spoils without requiring the return of spoiled canned foods, and in lieu thereof, requiring only the best available evidence of such loss; or in the alternative, by agreement of buyer and seller by mutually satisfactory provision in the contracts, full compensation be made to the buyer by the seller during this emergency for the probable losses occasioned by spoiled canned foods."

The plan in general contemplates the leasing of suitable warehouse space by the National Canners Association to which spoiled canned foods will be shipped by the distributors for inspection and, if necessary, destruction, by a representative of the Association and the proper food officials.

The details of a plan to handle this proposition in a successful manner do not seem to present insurmountable difficulties, but, in order to make it effective, the plan must have the approval and coöperation of food officials, distributors, and canners. These details are expected to cover nearly every condition which will arise in making practical application of the plan. They have received the approval of the Conference Committee of the National Canners Association and are being put in shape to present at the Annual Convention of the National and State Food Officials which will be held in Duluth August 14-17.

It will be noted in the Resolution adopted at Chicago that the Conference Committee recognizes that it will be necessary for buyers and sellers to arrange temporarily some mutual understanding that will be satisfactory. It should be borne in mind that this recognition by the Conference Committee is temporary and terminates under the wording of the Resolution on February 1, 1924. It can be safely said that no member of the Conference Committee is willing to make any recognition of a permanent allowance in lieu of swells, because this system, as pointed out in our previous letter, discriminates against the efficient canner.

Meanwhile, we are advised that canners are being requested by purchasers to make cash discounts which are much larger in many cases than those justified by the experience table which has been carefully compiled by this Association and published in full in the preceding membership letter.

It should also be borne in mind that owing to the ruling of the Government and local food officials prohibiting the return of swells, it is necessary that the canners present some suitable plan that will protect the buyer from spoilage losses, but at the same time impose no individual hardship. The general plan as outlined seems to be the only solution of this question.

Unless this plan or something better is put into effect at once, the industry will be approached in single units to make cash allowances which in many instances will lead to only an additional trade discount.

We are exceedingly anxious to have your views as to whether this plan appeals to you as being practical.

Illness Alleged Due to Canned Foods.

The Association is investigating three cases of illness alleged to be due to canned foods, the notices of which were received this week. These cases involve canned meat, potted ham, and soup.

An interesting report was received in a case of alleged illness from eating canned olives. Our operative found that the story of illness from eating canned olives was circulated by the family, merely to head off gossip when a daughter, who had been employed in a nearby city, returned to her home.

Recently, a case was investigated in Tennessee, in which a young man's death was ascribed to eating canned tomatoes. It developed in this case that he had, in a spirit of daring, drunk a quantity of kerosene previous to eating the tomatoes.

In this connection, it develops that there have been several instances recently in which death was caused by drinking kerosene, so it is unlikely that the tomatoes had anything at all to do with the young man's illness or death.

Newspaper Corrects Statement.

It was recently reported in one of the Central Western papers that a Mr. . . . . had died from eating canned . . . . . Upon investigation of this case, it was found that the man died from heart trouble, and when this was called to the attention of the paper, we received the following letter:

"We have your letter of July 10 concerning the news notice that appeared in our issue of June 25 under the heading 'Death from Ptomaine Poisoning'.

"We have investigated this matter, and the indications are that this man did not die of ptomaine poisoning, but from heart and liver trouble, with other complications. The man was a negro and was being treated by two negro physicians for gall stones. The information upon which the original story was based came by telephone from a man who said he was a brother of the dead man. The canned . . . . . was alleged to have been purchased from . . . . . , where the man worked.

"We thank you very much for calling this matter to our attention."

Meeting of Tin Plate Research Committee.

In last week's letter we called attention to the Conference to be held with the Bureau of Standards on August 15th in connection with the tin plate investigation.

The Chairman of the Committee, Doctor Elwell, is exceedingly anxious to have all canners who contemplate attending this Conference to meet him in the office of the Association at Washington on the evening of the 14th. If possible for you to attend, please advise Doctor Elwell in advance of the meeting.

France Issues Notice to Importers.

"(Laws of July 11, 1906 and of June 28, 1913)
"Withdrawal of Relaxations.

"At the expiration of a period of three months dating from the publication of this notice, the relaxations which were in force during the war, by reason thereof, shall no longer be applied to the rulings of the laws of July 11, 1906, and of June 28, 1913, insofar as they concern:

"1. The indication of origin for canned salmon originating in Canada, Japan, Siberia, and the United States of America;

"2. The maximum weights for salt fish, tuna fish, sardines, etc., shipped either from Spain into Italy, either from the latter country into Spain or into England, or to the destination of Tunis.

"After this period, therefore, the above-mentioned goods shall satisfy the rulings of the aforesaid laws in order to be imported into France, admitted to warehouse.transit, or circulation, exhibited, placed on sale, or detained for a commercial purpose.

"Attention is called to the fact that the indication of the country of origin must be impressed on each container, by stamp in clear and distinct raised or sunken Roman characters of at least 4 millimeters, in the center of the top or of the bottom and on a space not carrying any other impression. The same indication must be impressed indelibly upon the cases and packings used in the shipments. The cans in question must not weigh more than one kilogram."

Salmon canners will please note above notice.

Studies and Cultural Notes on Spinach.

The Bureau of Raw Products Research is in receipt of a bulletin from the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, published in June, entitled "Spinach Studies in Passaic County and Cultural Notes". The reports of yields of fourteen varieties of spinach and the response of spinach to different fertilizers will be of interest to spinach canners.

Copies of the bulletin may be obtained from the Washington office of the National Canners Association, or from theeAgricultural Experiment Station, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

United States Navy in the Market for Canned Foods.

Bids on 637,000 pounds of canned apple sauce, under Schedule No.1127, Supplies and Accounts, will be opened at the Navy Department, Washington, D.C., at 10 a.m., on August 14, 1923; and on August 21, 1923, at 10 a.m., bids on 404,000 pounds of canned sauerkraut, under Schedule No. 1143, Supplies and Accounts, and 186,000 gallons of catsup, under Schedule No.1144, Supplies and Accounts, will be opened. Canners interested should communicate with the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Navy Building, Washington, D. C., and request blanks for bids on the above requisitions.

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